

Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

×

## Lion's Roar

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Store](#)
- Our Magazines
  - [Bd Buddhadharma](#)
  - [LR Lion's Roar magazine](#)
- [Teachings](#)
- [Life](#)
- [How to Meditate](#)
- [News](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Store](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
  - [\[Custom\]](#)
  - [\[Custom\]](#)
  - [\[Custom\]](#)
  - [\[Custom\]](#)



[Lion's Roar](#)



[Our Magazines](#) ▾
 [Teachings](#)
[Life](#)
[How to Meditate](#)
[News](#)
[About Us](#)
[Store](#)
[Subscribe](#) ▾

## The Best of Thich Nhat Hanh: Life, Teachings, Quotes, and Books

by [Lion's Roar Staff](#) | December 14, 2017



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

x



Photo by [Duc](#).

The past is gone, the future is not yet here, and if we do not go back to ourselves in the present moment, we cannot be in touch with life.  
-Thich Nhat Hanh

“We gauge the greatness of spiritual teachers by the depth, breadth, and impact of their teachings, and by the example their lives set for us. By all these measures, Thich Nhat Hanh is one of the leading spiritual masters of our age,” writes *Lion's Roar* editor-in-chief Melvin McLeod in his introduction to *The Pocket Thich Nhat Hanh*. In his 91 years, Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh has made a global impact as a teacher, author, activist, and the founder of the [Engaged Buddhism](#) movement. His simple yet deeply profound teachings aim to lead students towards a life of mindfulness, joy, and peace—a life that benefits the planet, and all beings.

## Contents

- [The Life of Thich Nhat Hanh](#)
- [Teachings on meditation](#)
- [Teachings on love](#)
- [Teachings on mindfulness](#)
- [Teachings on peace and happiness](#)
- [Teachings on Buddhist philosophy](#)
- [Teachings on saving the Earth](#)
- [Interviews and profiles](#)
- [Quotes](#)
- [Calligraphy](#)
- [Books](#)



## The Life of Thich Nhat Hanh




Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

✕

he entered the monastery at Tu Hieu Temple in Vietnam at sixteen and worked with his primary teacher, Zen master Thanh Quy Chan That. In 1949, Nhat Hanh, then 23, was ordained as a monk after receiving training in Vietnamese traditions of Mahayana Buddhism and Vietnamese Thien Buddhism.

Nhat Hanh became editor-in-chief of the periodical created by the Unified Vietnam Buddhist Association, *Vietnamese Buddhism*. He went on to begin his activist work, founding La Boi Press and the Van Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon. Nhat Hanh also founded the School of Youth for Social Service, a neutral corps of Buddhist peaceworkers who established schools, built healthcare clinics, and rebuilt villages in rural areas.

 Dr. Martin Luther King announcing that he had nominated Thich Nhat Hanh for the Nobel Peace Prize. Image via public domain.

Dr. Martin Luther King and Thich Nhat Hanh. Image: public domain.

### The Vietnam War and Engaged Buddhism

Nhat Hanh studied comparative religion at Princeton University in 1960 and was subsequently appointed a lecturer in Buddhism at Columbia University. He had become fluent in English, Japanese, Chinese, Sanskrit, Pali, and English. In 1963, he returned to Vietnam in 1963 to continue initiating nonviolent peace efforts.

The founding of the Engaged Buddhism movement was his response to the Vietnam War. Nhat Hanh's mission was to engage with suffering caused by war and injustice and to create a new strain of Buddhism that could save his country. In the formative years of the Engaged Buddhism movement, Nhat Hanh met Cao Ngoc Phuong, who would later become [Sister Chang Kong](#). She hoped to arise activism for the poor in the Buddhist community, working closely with Nhat Hanh to do so. She remains his closest disciple and collaborator to this day.

Three years later, Nhat Hanh returned to the U.S. to lead a symposium at Cornell University on Vietnamese Buddhism. There, he met with [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) and requested that King denounce the Vietnam War publicly to his large following. Dr. King granted the request in the following year with a speech that questioned America's involvement in the war. Soon after, he nominated Nhat Hanh for a Nobel Peace Prize. "I do not personally know of anyone more worthy of [the prize] than this gentle monk from Vietnam. His ideas for peace, if applied, would build a monument to ecumenism, to world brotherhood, to humanity," he wrote.



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

✕



Photo by [Duc](#).

Nhat Hanh served as the delegate for the Buddhist Peace Delegation at the Paris Peace talks in 1969, and the Paris Peace Accords were later signed in 1973. Nhat Hanh was exiled from Vietnam after these events and remained in France, a turn of events that deeply hurt the monk, and would keep him from his birthplace for many years to come.

### Establishing the Order of Interbeing

Today, Nhat Hanh heads the Order of Interbeing, a monastic and lay group that he'd founded in 1966. In 1969, he founded the Unified Buddhist Church, and later in 1975, formed the Sweet Potatoes Meditation Center southeast of Paris, France. As the center grew in popularity, Nhat Hanh and Sister Chan Khong founded [Plum Village](#), a *vihara* (Buddhist monastery) and Zen center, in the South of France in 1982. Both Nhat Hanh and Sister Chan Khong reside at Plum Village today. The center is open to the public for much of the year and houses retreats that see people traveling from across the globe to attend. Additionally, many dharma centers across the U.S. have been established as part the Order of Interbeing.

### Returning to Vietnam

After many negotiations, the Vietnamese government allowed Nhat Hanh to return to Vietnam for a visit in 2005. He was able to teach, publish four books in Vietnamese, travel the country, and return to his root temple. Although his first trip home stirred controversy, Nhat Hanh was allowed to return again in 2007 to support new monastics in his Order, organize chanting ceremonies to help heal remaining wounds from the Vietnam War, and to lead retreats in his birth country.

 Thich Nhat Hanh in hospital

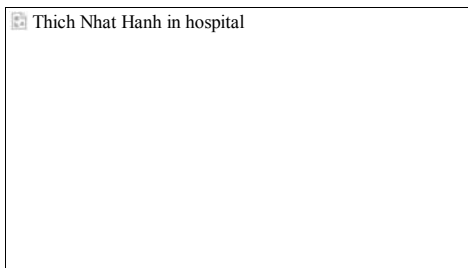


Photo by Velcrow Ripper.

### Thich Nhat Hanh's Health

Nhat Hanh suffered a [brain hemorrhage](#) in November 2014. He was taken to a stroke rehabilitation clinic at Bordeaux University Hospital, where he was able to recover enough to enjoy sipping tea outdoors and listen to the sounds of the outside world. As of [June 2015](#), Nhat Hanh continues to reside at Plum Village, where his health has made remarkable process and he is able to enjoy being "out in nature, enjoying the blossoms, listening to the birds and resting at the foot of a tree."

•••••

### Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings on meditation



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

×

### [Thich Nhat Hanh on How to Sit](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh's incredibly simple instructions for meditation.

### [Thich Nhat Hanh on Walking Meditation](#)

The practice of mindful walking, says Thich Nhat Hanh, is a profound and pleasurable way to deepen our connection with our body and the earth. We breathe, take a mindful step, and come back to our true home.

□

## **Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings on love**

### [Growing Together](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh shows us how we can use loving relationships to cultivate the seeds of buddhahood inside us.

### [After the Honeymoon](#)

Falling in love is easy, but staying in love takes work. Thich Nhat Hanh offers advice for cultivating a relationship that's loving and strong.

### [Transforming Anger Into Love](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh offers advice on using mindfulness to take care of your anger, and ultimately transform it into love and understanding.

□

## **Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings on mindfulness**



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

×

### [Five Mindfulness Trainings](#)

The five mindfulness trainings are an expression of the five precepts, the core of Buddhist ethics, and offer a down-to-earth method of practicing mindfulness in daily life.

### [Thich Nhat Hanh on The Practice of Mindfulness](#)

It is such a simple practice, but it can transform your life. The great meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh teaches five mindfulness exercises to help you live with happiness and joy.

### [The Moment is Perfect](#)

There is nothing we experience—from the simple act of eating to the complications of work and relationships—that we cannot approach with the mindfulness and compassion we develop in our meditation.

□

## **Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings on peace and happiness**

### [5 Practices for Nurturing Happiness](#)

A teaching from Thich Nhat Hanh's book, *No Mud, No Lotus: The Art of Transforming Suffering*.

### [Happiness in Every Breath](#)

When we stop feeding our cravings, says Thich Nhat Hanh, we discover that we already have everything we need to be happy.

### [There is no path to peace. The path is peace.](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh, in his 2003 address to congress, says that only deep listening, mindfulness, and gentle communication can remove the wrong perceptions that are the foundation of violence.

□

## **Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings on Buddhist philosophy**



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

×



Photo by [Paul Davis](#).

### [The Practice of Sangha](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh explains that sangha is more than a community. It's a deep spiritual practice.

### [The Fourteen Precepts of Engaged Buddhism](#)

Number one? "Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. Buddhist systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth."

### [The Fullness of Emptiness](#)

Emptiness is not something to be afraid of, says Thich Nhat Hanh. The *Heart Sutra* teaches us that form may be empty of self but it's full of everything else.

### [The Four Layers of Consciousness](#)

*Abhidharma*, Buddhism's map of the mind, is sometimes treated as a topic of merely intellectual interest. In fact, says Thich Nhat Hanh, identifying the different elements of consciousness, and understanding how they interact, is essential to our practice of meditation.

### [The Practice of Looking Deeply Using Three Dharma Seals](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh teaches that by looking deeply we develop insight into impermanence and no self. These are the keys to the door of reality.

□

## **Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings on saving the Earth**

### [The World We Have](#)

Only when we combine our concern for the planet with spiritual practice will we have the tools to make the profound personal transformations necessary to address the coming environmental crisis. Thich Nhat Hanh offers us the guiding principles for a new ecospirituality of mindful living.

### [Earth Gathas](#)

*Gathas* help us to practice mindfulness in our daily lives and to look deeply. Reciting these short verses will bring awareness, peace, and joy to simple activities. Thich Nhat Hanh offers *gathas* for recycling, touching the earth, and more.

### [Wake Up to the Revolution](#)

Only when we recognize our connectedness to the earth, says Thich Nhat Hanh, can real change begin.



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

×

THICH NHAT HANH INTERVIEWS AND PROFILES

Photo by David Nelson.



Photo by David Nelson.

[Profile: The Plum Village Tradition in America](#)

A 2011 *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly* community profile.

[In Engaged Buddhism, Peace Begins with You](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh, who originated Engaged Buddhism, in an interview with John Malkin.

[Peace in Every Step](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh's life of courage and compassion.

[You Don't Need to Be Buddhist](#)

Thich Nhat Hanh explains how anyone can use the five mindfulness trainings to lead a life of understanding and compassion.

[Be Beautiful, Be Yourself](#)

Andrea Miller's exclusive interview with Thich Nhat Hanh.

~A Lion's Roar Collector's Edition~  
**Thich Nhat Hanh**  
 Order Now

**Thich Nhat Hanh quotes**

The ocean of suffering is immense, but if you turn around, you can see the land.

☐

We have to walk in a way that we only print peace and serenity on the Earth. Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet.





Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

✕



We really have to understand the person we want to love. If our love is only a will to possess, it is not love. If we only think of ourselves, if we know only our own needs and ignore the needs of the other person, we cannot love.



The mind can go in a thousand directions, but on this beautiful path, I walk in peace. With each step, the wind blows. With each step, a flower blooms.



## Thich Nhat Hanh's calligraphy

Thich Nhat Hanh began creating calligraphy in 1994 and views his work as a meditative practice. It is estimated that he has created around 10,000 works of calligraphy. Much of his mindful art has been sold to raise funds for his many global humanitarian projects.



### Calligraphic Meditation Video

from [Blue Cliff Monastery](#)



In this video from [Blue Cliff Monastery](#), Thich Nhat Hanh describes his “calligraphic meditation” process. Below, you’ll find some of his most loved calligraphies.



## Books by Thich Nhat Hanh

### Peace is Every Breath: A Practice for Our Busy Lives

*HarperOne*

“You have lots of work to do, and you like doing it,” says Thich Nhat Hanh at the beginning of *Peace Is Every Breath*. “But working too much, taking care of so many things, tires you out. You want to practice meditation, so you can be more relaxed and have more peace, happiness, and joy in your life. But you don’t have time for daily meditation practice.” If this describes your situation, *Peace Is Every Breath* will be an excellent resource. It offers anecdotes, meditations, and advice on connecting with your present experience without putting your life on hold. Thich Nhat Hanh explains: “It isn’t necessary to set aside a certain period exclusively for ‘Spiritual Practice’ with a capital S and a capital P. Our spiritual practice can be there at any moment, as we cultivate the energy of mindfulness and concentration.”

### FEAR: Essential Wisdom for Getting Through the Storm

*HarperOne*

In *Fear: Essential Wisdom for Getting Through the Storm*, Thich Nhat Hanh addresses the role mindfulness can play in letting go of our fears. We are afraid of being powerless, he teaches. But if we live in the present moment—if we have mindfulness—we will have the power to look deeply at our fears and understand their source. At that point, fear will no longer control us and we will touch the ultimate joy. We’ll realize that right now we’re okay. Our eyes can see the beauty of the sky and our ears can hear the voices of the people we love.

### Making Space: Creating a Home Meditation Practice

*Parallax Press*

Peaceful places create peace in our minds and bodies. “That is the intention of sacred space,” it says in the introduction of this new release. “But we don’t need to wait until we can find a church, temple, mosque, synagogue, or other space designed for sacred contemplation. . . . If we make a space for contemplation and meditation right in our own homes, then peace and joy are always available to us.” In *Making Space*, Thich Nhat Hanh begins with the how-tos of stopping, breathing, and sitting. Then he delves into the importance of creating a “breathing room” or “breathing corner,” a calm place at home that you can go to when you’re feeling uneasy, sad, or angry, and thereby come back to yourself. Later chapters explore topics such as how to invite the bell, how to make an altar, and how to make your bed a real place of rest and relaxation.

### Love Letter to the Earth

*Parallax Press*

Environmental activists get a bad rap for being dour. Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, however, is anything but. Instead of finger-pointing and calling for austerity, his solution to our environmental crisis is mindfulness. Through mindfulness, he says, we realize that the Earth is not simply the ground beneath our feet—we are the Earth. Every cell in our body comes from



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

✕

## The Blooming of a Lotus

Beacon Press

Thich Nhat Hanh offers guided exercises to bring practitioners into greater harmony with themselves and their world. The text includes music to aid our memories in helping us learn simple principles. The many meditations focus on guiding sentences that glide along with the breath. This revised edition includes five new meditations: They show us how mindful consumption and mindful actions can help prevent suffering and water the seeds of compassion; how to be in touch with our Buddha nature; and how to see our parents more deeply. These meditations will deepen the practice of advanced practitioners, as well as start beginners on the path.

## How to Eat

Parallax Press

While some monastic communities de-emphasize food in favor of focusing wholly on the spiritual, Thich Nhat Hanh's community considers food central to practice. "In the Catholic tradition, in the Eucharist," Thich Nhat Hanh says, "you see the piece of bread as the body of Jesus. In the Buddhist tradition, we see the piece of bread as the body of the cosmos." When we mindfully savor each bite, we understand that in bread there's the sun and rain, the soil and compost, the farmer and baker, because without any one of them there'd be no bread. So, when we eat mindfully, we feel nourished by and connected to the universe. We also become more aware of our bodies and emotions and, thus, naturally eat in moderation, leading to better health. Moreover, mindful eating is a powerful tool for social change. In deeply contemplating our food we find ourselves inspired to advocate for best-farming practices and/or take action on behalf of the world's hungry. *How to Eat* is a concise and cheerful guide to mindful cooking, serving meals, eating, and washing the dishes.

## A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles

Plum Blossom Books

For many years, Thich Nhat Hanh has been teaching pebble practice to give children and their families a tangible way to return to their breath and connect with the world around them. *A Handful of Quiet* is a lovingly illustrated book that brings this meditation to life. All you'll need to practice it is a quiet spot and four ordinary pebbles. Each represents a different image embodying a particular quality. You can certainly choose your own images and qualities, but in Nhat Hanh's classic version pebble one represents the freshness and beauty of a flower, while pebble two represents the solidity of a mountain. Pebble three represents the reflectivity of calm water and pebble four, the freedom of space. Breathing in and out, you pick up each pebble in turn and in your mind's eye see yourself as the respective image. If you're holding the flower pebble, for instance, you see yourself as a flower in the garden of humanity. Connecting with your inner flower, you know that you are fresh, pleasant, and loveable.



### [About Lion's Roar Staff](#)

[Lion's Roar](#) is the website of [Lion's Roar](#) magazine (formerly the *Shambhala Sun*) and [Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly](#), with exclusive Buddhist news, teachings, art, and commentary. Sign up for the [Lion's Roar weekly newsletter](#) and follow Lion's Roar on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Pinterest](#).

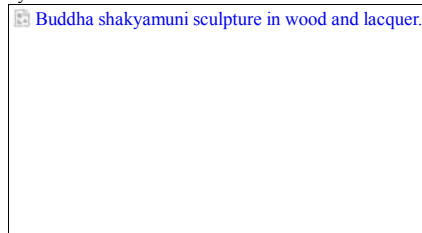
Topics: [Homepage](#), [Thich Nhat Hanh](#)

### Related Posts...



[The Best of Pema Chödrön: Life, Quotes, and Books](#)

by Lion's Roar Staff



[Buddhism and Meditation for Beginners](#)

by Lion's Roar Staff



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

×



[5 Practices for Nurturing Happiness](#)

by Thich Nhat Hanh



Popular



[How We Get Hooked and How We Get Unhooked](#) Shenpa is the urge, the hook, that ...



[Mindful Movements](#) Thich Nhat Hanh offers three exercises for ...



["The Last Jedi" Cranks Up Star Wars' Buddhist Themes](#) Matthew Bortolin, the author of The Dharma ...



[The "Difficult Person" Exercise](#) The Difficult Person exercise provides a tool ...



[Restoring the Mind to Kindness](#) Sylvia Boorstein on how to rescue your ...

[Welcome to LionsRoar.com](#)

By [Lion's Roar Staff](#)

We're glad to have you here. But first: who are "we"? You may very well know us as the publishers of two Buddhist magazines, the Shambhala Sun and Buddhadharma. Then again, you may not know us at all. Either way, please allow us to re-introduce ourselves: We're the Shambhala Sun Foundation. We [...]

- [Contact](#)
- [Donate](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Subscriber Services](#)
- [Privacy](#)
- [BUDDHIST DIRECTORY](#)



TEACHINGS

- [Theravada & Insight](#)
- [Tibetan & Vajrayana](#)
- [Zen](#)
- [Philosophy](#)
- [Guides](#)

LIFE

- [Love & Relationships](#)
- [Practice in Everyday Life](#)
- [Wellness & Psychology](#)
- [Wisdom for Difficult Times](#)



Get the latest in Buddhism, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

×

- [Getting Comfortable](#)
- [Getting Started](#)
- [Other Meditations](#)
- [Learn about Buddhism](#)

#### NEWS

- [Buddhist News](#)
- [Arts & Culture](#)
- [Current Events](#)
- [Reviews](#)
- [Teachers & Centers](#)

© 2017 Lion's Roar | Email: [\[email protected\]](#) | Tel: 902.422.8404 | Published by Lion's Roar Foundation

